

officers have not been prosecuted for past accidents and argued that an end to the commander's Navy career punishment enough. Said Secretary Pirie: "I think this incident is really tragic because of the possibility that the Navy will have lost Scott Waddle's services."

But the real tragedy is the loss of nine lives because of poor conduct aboard the submarine. And while that conduct may not have risen to the criminal, the Navy admirals who drew that conclusion had strong political incentives to do so. Ever since the accident occurred, Navy officials have tried to deflect public attention from the guests aboard the *Greenville* and the larger program of hosting civilians aboard ships. At first the Navy refused to disclose the civilians' names; though the board of inquiry was specifically charged with investigating the guest program and the role of the civilians, none of the VIPs was called to testify during 12 days of public hearings. There are conflicting and still-unresolved accounts about whether the civilians distracted the *Greenville's* commander and crew, but one fact is undisputed: The submarine's excursion that day and the emergency surfacing exercise that led to the collision were conducted solely for the benefit of the visitors, many of whom had earned the trip by raising money for a memorial to the World War II battleship *Missouri*.

Cmdr. Waddle's attorney made clear that his court-martial defense would have focused on the Navy public relations program, a tactic that might have produced just the embarrassment the Navy has tried to avoid. Did that prospect play a role in Adm. Fargo's decision? Yes or no, the absence of a court-martial means the only examination of the civilian guest program will be buried in the 2,000-page report by the court of inquiry. News reports have suggested that Adm. Fargo will recommend a review of the Navy visitor program and a halt to the practice of conducting excursions solely for the benefit of visitors. Those sound like appropriate conclusions. But if the Navy has its way, the reasons for reaching them, and the role played by the visitors program in the *Ehime Maru* tragedy, will never get the full airing that a court-martial would have provided.

[From USA Today, Apr. 23, 2001]

NAVY DUCKS SCRUTINY

As the Pacific Fleet commander today metes out punishment against the captain of the sub that collided with a Japanese fishing boat Feb. 9, the disciplinary action is secondary to a more critical point: That the Navy itself is likely to get off unscathed.

The commander already has decided to forgo a court-martial, according to news reports. That means Cmdr. Scott Waddle won't be imprisoned for the botched procedures and cut corners that contributed to the deaths of nine Japanese passengers. Even so, he faces punishment short of jail time.

Not so for the Navy, which ducked self-scrutiny during the public hearings into the collision and is now poised to do so again.

During a 12-day court of enquiry into the deadly transgressions by Waddle and his crew, the Navy failed to question any of the 16 civilian guests for whom that day's sub ride was conducted. And it did so despite the enquiry's written mandate to probe civilian-guest programs. The Navy thus obscured the degree to which its improperly organized public-relations outings distract crew from more important duties, and harm the service's reputation.

It will use the same obscuring tactic today, reading Waddle his punishment behind closed doors in a brief "admiral's mast" proceeding rather than a court-martial. The

latter would have been public and lengthy, and might have triggered an appeal during which any dirty laundry from the Navy's guest program might have come out.

Regardless of the merits of the court-martial decision, no valid interest is served by the Navy's failure to confront hazardous practices. The Navy had until last week to call more witnesses to prove more deeply the civilian guest program. It did not do so.

There's still opportunity for a full accounting. The Navy could report on what went wrong with its civilian visit. Among the questions that remain unanswered are whether the visitors distracted the crew, as some members initially told the National Transportation Safety Board; why the unscheduled civilian ride was held, against guidelines; whether guests were favored because of personal connections; and how pervasive such problems are.

If the Navy stays true to form, such a public accounting won't be forthcoming. It'll be left to the Department of Defense Inspector General or the NTSB to draw conclusions. But these are unlikely to satisfy public and congressional questions as fully as the Navy could, and should.

Shortly after the accident, Waddle publicly took responsibility for it. It's high time his superiors demonstrate the same sense of duty.

RESTORING THE LAFAYETTE-ESCADRILLE MEMORIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues the deteriorating state of a memorial to our World War I aviators.

The Lafayette-Escadrille Memorial, which is located west of Paris, honors all the United States aviators who flew for France in World War I, with 68 Americans memorialized or buried on the site.

Formed in 1916 as part of the French army, the Lafayette-Escadrille was the birth of the American combat United States Air Force we have today. In fact, Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, the first U.S. trained ace, was trained by Mr. Lufberry, one of the original U.S. volunteers in the Escadrille. "Escadrille" is a French term for squadron.

Seven Americans formed the original American squadron. When the Escadrille transferred to U.S. command in 1918, 265 American volunteers had served in the French air service, with 180 of those having flown combat missions. In all, the Escadrille flew 3,000 combat sorties, amassing nearly 200 victories. By the end of the war, most of the fallen of the Lafayette-Escadrille were buried along the battlefield in various military cemeteries.

A joint French-American committee was organized to locate a final resting place for those American aviators. With land donated by the French Government, the Memorial was dedicated on July 4, 1928.

My colleagues, the memorial is a site to behold. It encompasses an arch of

triumph with a series of columns placed on either side. It contains a sanctuary and a burial crypt. Sunlight fills the tomb by way of 13 stained glass windows. Each of these works of art depicts the Escadrille flying its many missions over the battlefields of Europe. One of the more striking stained glass works depicts the U.S. aviators escorted by an eagle on a symbolic flight across the Atlantic to come to the aid of the French.

However, sadly I report, the memorial is in desperate need of repair. The structure sits in a meadow with a high water table. Heavy rains flood the tomb, worsened by the poorly functioning drains and water leaking through the terrace behind the memorial. Structural repairs are needed for the crypt and the overall foundation, and double glass is needed to protect the remarkable stained glass windows.

In 1930, U.S. attorney Nelson Cromwell founded the Lafayette-Escadrille Memorial Foundation. He endowed the foundation with \$1.5 million for its maintenance, but unfortunately, all of those funds have been exhausted. Today, the foundation has a mirror organization in France and a pledge of monetary support to restore the memorial.

Although studies to estimate the cost of restoring the memorial are ongoing, it is obvious that the resources required will exceed the meager means of the foundation. The French Government has already indicated its willingness to assist, and it is time for the U.S. Government to do the same.

Just as we did in World War I, World War II, and most recently, in the Gulf War, it is time for the U.S. and French Governments to join together in doing what is right and what is just. This is an important memory. We must perform the duty of living and properly honor the memory of those who gave so much.

Combining the efforts of private industry and Congress, it is my hope to join the French in restoring the memorial to its original beauty. It is the right thing to do, to honor our fallen aviators of World War I and to demonstrate our respect for the sacrifices of all Americans in service to our Nation and our allies.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting funding for the restoration of this magnificent memorial.

ADVOCATING A MORE APPROPRIATE ROLE FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN DISASTER RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, you cannot promote livable communities without examining the problems associated with our complex set of